

FORMER CIA CHIEF CRITICAL OF REAGAN
BY BRIAN MOTTAZ
SEATTLE, WA

Former CIA chief Stansfield Turner said Sunday he believes President Reagan overreacted by sending Navy vessels into the Gulf of Sidra to challenge the territorial claims of Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy.

Turner, a retired Navy admiral, said the United States alienated itself from its allies by going into the gulf appearing to be spoiling for a fight.

"There is no question Khadafy is involved in terrorist activity and should be put in his place, but when we went in there with all our ships, it appeared to the world we were trying to unseat Khadafy," he said in a speech to a convention of restaurateurs in Seattle.

Turner, who was CIA chief in the Carter administration, suggested it would have been better for American ships to have entered the gulf quietly to establish their right to be there.

"People would have been more sympathetic than if we had gone in there with a chip on our shoulder," Turner said of the resulting confrontation with Libya military forces.

Libya fired at least six missiles at Navy warplanes, and the United States responded by bombing Libyan radar sites and sinking Libyan patrol boats late last month.

Turner said it would be foolish to think the United States succeeded in curbing Khadafy's terrorist activities through a confrontation essentially designed to demonstrate freedom of the seas in the Gulf of Sidra.

"Losing a few boats and radar sites is not going to turn Khadafy into a gentle fellow," Turner said.

Instead, Turner said such acts only encourage terrorists to step up their activities against the United States and undermine efforts to work with other nations in combating international terrorism.

"We're alienating all our European allies because they're seeing what we're trying to do as a political action and not an anti-terrorist action," Turner said. "Alone, we're not going to pressure Khadafy into doing what we think he should do."

Turner also took a shot at President Reagan's policy of supporting the Contra rebels in Nicaragua as further undermining relations with allies by making it appear the United States supports a terrorist group in Latin America.

"I feel the Contra's activity is largely terrorist activity," Turner said. "They're not a military organization trying to fight the Sandinistas. They're blowing up bridges and keeping farmers from tending their crops."

Continued

2.

Turner said he is also concerned that few believe the Contras will succeed in overthrowing the Sandinista government, raising questions about what the United States will ultimately have to do in Central America.

'We're stuck with either sending the Marines in to clean this up or walking away and leaving them holding the bag,' he said.

Turner said the United States is particularly vulnerable to terrorism because terrorists view this country as 'the great power of the world' and attacks against Americans generate the publicity terrorists seek.

'I don't believe the prospects of exporting terrorism to the United States to a significant degree is very high,' he said. 'It's so much easier to attack Americans abroad.'

Turner urged Americans to be even more vigilant when they travel abroad, or accept the fact there are some areas of the world they should stay away from for the time being.

He also said Americans should accept need for increased airport security so long as the threat of terrorism remains.

'There will be no simple solutions to this problem like blowing the terrorists to smithereens,' he said.